

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A combination telephone and monitoring system,
comprising

a base unit (9) having a transceiver for wireless
communication with a plurality of peripheral devices (10, 25-29);

a calling unit (30) in communication with said base unit (9)
and containing means for automatic dialing out to a remote
location and for transmitting Dual Tone Multiple Frequency (DTMF)
signals;

at least one peripheral device (10, 25-29) having a
transceiver adapted for wireless local communication (22,24) with
said base unit (9) and

means (12, 14) for generating information concerning at
least one state or condition of a person or premises, for
relaying by said calling unit to said remote location.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said base unit (9) and
said calling unit (30a) are contained in a common housing.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein said base unit (9) and
said calling unit (30b) are separate units.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein said base unit (9) and said calling unit (30b) are separate units which communicate with each other by radio signals.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a telephone processor (31) for receiving and interpreting DTMF signals via a public switched telephone network (PSTN).

6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a telephone processor (31) for receiving and interpreting DTMF signals via a wireless communications network.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein said DTMF signals represent commands, and said system reprograms itself in accordance with said commands received as DTMF signals.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one isolation switch (33), responsive to a control signal from said calling unit (30), for electrically isolating any terminal equipment from a telephone jack associated therewith, when commanded by said calling unit, in order to give said calling unit exclusive use of a telephone line (92) connected to said jack.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein said isolation switch includes means for receiving commands from said base unit (9) wirelessly.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said means for receiving commands wirelessly is a radio receiver.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein said radio receiver operates in a 300 MHz frequency band.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein said peripheral device is a personal communicator (10) having means to exchange both voice and data signals (22, 24) bidirectionally with said base unit.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein said peripheral device is a medical sensor adapted to report a physiological condition of a person to said base unit, for relaying to said remote location.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein said peripheral device is a premises sensor adapted to generate an alert message upon occurrence of at least one predetermined condition or event within a predetermined sensing range of said premises sensor.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein said system transmits, to said remote location, a unique identifier as a sequence of Dual-Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) tones.

16. A personal communicator (10) having
a transceiver capable of transmitting both voice and data signals (22, 24) to a transceiver-equipped telephone base unit up to 100 meters away;

a microphone and speaker coupled to said transceiver for exchanging voice communications with said base unit; and

at least one touch-sensitive element adapted for triggering transmission of a distress data signal, indicating that the person touching said element is requesting assistance, to said telephone base unit.

17. The communicator of claim 16, wherein said transceiver, microphone and speaker operate as a speakerphone for voice communications relayed by said base unit to and from an external network.

18. The communicator of claim 16, further comprising memory means for storing data representing any of a plurality of different signals to be sent upon actuation of said touch-sensitive element.

19. An information management network for storing profiles of customers and responding to an alert signal concerning a particular customer by generating at least one message to recipient(s) predesignated by said customer in his/her/its profile, comprising:

means (65) for receiving said alert signal from a remote location and translating said alert signal into digital data representing a source of said alert signal;

database means (67) for associating said source of said alert signal with a profile previously stored by said customer;

an event notification generator (67), responsive to output signals from said database means, for generating at least one message about said alert signal to recipient(s) predesignated by said customer in said customer's profile; and

a message renderer (69) which transmits said at least one message to said recipient(s) via a predesignated medium.

20. The network of claim 19, wherein said predesignated medium includes at least one of:

- A) a telephone call;
- B) a fax transmission;
- C) a paging message;
- D) an e-mail message;
- E) an optically transmitted signal;
- F) a radio transmission; and
- G) a sound signal.

21. The information management network of claim 19, further comprising means for generating a voice or data message and transmitting said voice or data message to a human operator (71).

22. The information management network of claim 19, wherein said database means further decodes a portion of said alert message as an event code, and said event notification generator communicates to said recipient(s) what kind of event has occurred.

23. The information management network of claim 19, wherein said profile includes health information concerning said customer, and said event notification generator communicates a relevant portion of said health information to said predesignated recipient(s), according to authorization from said customer.

24. The information management network of claim 19, further comprising means (78) for said customer to remotely revise contents of said customer's stored profile via telephone or global computer network.

25. The information management network of claim 20, further comprising means for said customer to authorize another person to access and revise contents of said customer's stored profile, and to determine whether a person seeking to access or revise a profile is in fact authorized to do so.

26. The information management network of claim 19, wherein said means for receiving and translating an alert signal includes a decoder (65) of Dual-Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) audio signals.

27. The system of claim 1, wherein said peripheral device is a circuit connected to an appliance which reports on a state or configuration of said appliance and accepts commands for controlling said state or configuration.

28. A method of remotely monitoring medical condition of a living organism, comprising the steps of:

placing a medical sensor (25-29) on the organism and, upon occurrence of any of a plurality of predetermined conditions, transmitting a wireless alert message from said sensor to a base unit (9);

connecting said base unit (9) via a public communications network (92) to a remote monitoring location and relaying information contained in said alert message to said remote monitoring location;

decoding (65) said alert message to identify which organism is the subject of the alert message;

retrieving (67) a previously stored profile concerning said organism; and

generating and transmitting (68) notifications to predesignated recipient(s) in accordance with information contained in said alert message and said previously stored profile.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said medical sensor is responsive (16) to a verbal expression by said organism.

30. A method of monitoring condition of a location, comprising the steps of

placing a sensor at the location and, upon occurrence of any of a plurality of predetermined conditions, transmitting a wireless alert message from said sensor to a base unit (9);

connecting said base unit (9) via a public communications network (92) to a remote monitoring location and relaying information contained in said alert message to said remote monitoring location;

decoding said alert message to identify which location is the subject of the alert message;

retrieving a previously stored profile concerning said location; and

generating and transmitting notifications to predesignated recipient(s) in accordance with information contained in said alert message and said previously stored profile.

31. A method of remotely controlling and configuring a premises monitoring system having means for receiving and interpreting Dual Tone Multiple Frequency (DTMF) signals, comprising the steps of:

making a connection via a public network from a remote location to a base unit located at premises to be controlled;

identifying the calling party at said remote location as a party authorized to instruct said premises monitoring system;

receiving a sequence of DTMF signals via said connection from said calling party;

converting said DTMF signals into digital form;

interpreting said digital signals as a sequence of prearranged commands; and

controlling and configuring said monitoring system in accordance with said commands.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising, after said identifying step, a step of reporting to said calling party information concerning a current or former state of said premises monitoring system.

33. A cordless telephone including transmitter/receiver means for exchanging voice communications on a first radio frequency with a first wireless peripheral device while simultaneously exchanging data communications on a different radio frequency with said first wireless peripheral device or with a second wireless peripheral device.

34. A corded telephone including transmitter/receiver means for exchanging voice communications on a first radio frequency with a first wireless peripheral device while simultaneously exchanging data communications on a different radio frequency with said first wireless peripheral device or with a second wireless peripheral device.